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ABSTRACT

The framework presented in this paper uses an organizational perspective to describe and compare alternative approaches to teacher education. Alternatives in teacher education such as competency-based teacher education, humanistic education, or programs typified by academic-oriented, liberal arts teacher education are discussed from the viewpoint of their basic assumptions on the learning and teaching processes. Two assumptions are presented to provide a two-dimensional framework for classifying and comparing alternative instructional approaches. The first is the perceived variability of students and the second the perceived nature of the instructional process. It is suggested that through the use of this framework the identification of an innovation through its underlying assumptions can provide insight into the consequences of that innovation. The point is made that a conceptual framework based upon organizational features can illuminate differences in alternative teacher education approaches. A primary implication of this paper is that as the profession comes to better understand the nature of schooling, the purpose of schools will become more specific and will require teachers with special expertise and experience. Greater attention will need to be devoted to linking the goals and purposes of a teacher education program with the types of public school organizations in which the teacher education graduates will teach. (JD)

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A Framework for Discussing Different Approaches to Teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to offer a framework that delineates basic assumptions underlying innovative approaches to teacher education. This framework uses an organizational perspective based upon the research of Charles Perrow (1969, 1970, 1973). Examples are provided to illustrate how the framework has been used to describe, classify, and compare alternative approaches to teacher education. Three implications are suggested through the use of this framework: (1) that the identification of an innovation through its underlying assumptions can provide insight into the consequences of that innovation, (2) a conceptual framework based upon organizational features can illuminate differences in alternative teacher education approaches, and (3) greater attention needs to be given to the fit or lack of fit between the assumptions of a teacher education curriculum and the assumptions of specific schools in which the graduates are placed.

INTRODUCTION

Teacher education faculties represent a spectrum of viewpoints concerning the nature and importance of field work, teaching competence, program governance, program design and individualization. Indeed, if there is one realization that is apparent from the experiences of the past decade it is that a framework is needed within which different perspectives in teacher education can be described and compared. Spodek (1975) has done some initial work in this area for teacher education programs in early childhood education. His review of Kohlberg's (1972) value based training strategy, Hitt's (1969) behaviorist's-phenomenological training strategy continuum, and MacDonald's (1973) interest based training strategy suggested that they could be considered to be three different approaches to teacher education in early childhood education. Spodek's point, that there exists a variety of alternative approaches to teacher education for programs in early childhood education, is just as true for general teacher education programs.

A cursory study of teacher education programs across the United States

reveals the diversity that is beginning to characterize innovations in pre-service education. Competency-Based Teacher Education programs, humanistic teacher education programs, or those programs typified by academic-oriented liberal arts teacher education are just a few examples of prominent alternatives in teacher education. All are highly vaunted as desirable alternatives to what is simply labeled herein as Traditional Teacher Education. However, a major obstacle is encountered when one wants to compare major teacher education issues across such diverse programs. That problem is the absence of an overall framework that identifies unique underlying sets of assumptions to better illuminate differences between these alternatives.

The purpose of this paper is to offer an overall framework which can be used to describe, classify and compare a variety of teacher education programs. To accomplish this end our discussion includes the theoretical background from which the framework has been developed, examples of how the framework has been used to describe, classify and compare different types of school organizations and how the framework can be similarly applied to describe, classify and compare alternative approaches to teacher education.

A Framework for Comparing Alternative Approaches to Teacher Education

The framework presented in this paper uses an organizational perspective to describe and compare alternative approaches to teacher education. The rationale for suggesting a framework from an organizational perspective is based upon the works of Bidwell (1965, 1973), Corwin (1974), Dreeban (1973), Iannacconne (1964), and Lortie (1973). The rationale suggests that the organizational structures within which instructional programs are imbedded may vary (that is, there exist more than one possible type of organizational structure in education), and that the tasks and performances of any instructional program are significantly influenced by the organizational structure in which that program is placed. This suggests that alternative instructional programs can be understood in terms of their unique organizational features.

A theoretical basis for comparing organizational features has been developed by Perrow (1969, 1970, 1973). Perrow compared organizations by classifying the performance strategies employed by workers in those organizations. He suggested that differentiation of organizations can be based upon the degree of routine or lack of routine in the predominant organizational performance strategy. The degree of routinization in a worker's performance strategy is characterized in Perrow's description by two variables: (1) the extent to which the process for transforming the raw material is perceived either as being well understood or being not well understood, and (2) the extent to which the raw material is perceived as being uniform or nonuniform.

Romberg (1974) and Anglin (1975) have adapted Perrow's comparative description to school organizations. Anglin maintains that assumptions about the variability of students and the nature of the instructional process are reflected in a school's general instructional program, the focus of decision making, and the general curriculum. That is, in a given instructional program students are treated as being basically the same (uniform), or they are treated as being quite unique (nonuniform). The most obvious indicator of the student variability assumption centers around how students are treated during the course of the educational process. If students are perceived as being basically the same, they are usually placed in homogeneous groups where requirements and expectations are the same for all children. If the students are perceived as being quite different, however, efforts are undertaken to meet individual needs through various instructional strategies.

The second assumption, which concerns the perceived nature of instruction, is reflected in the extent to which the instructional course of action is planned by someone other than the teacher. If the nature of the instructional process is perceived as well understood, educators act as if there is a body of knowledge about the instructional process that, when applied correctly (in some prescribed manner) can ensure instructional success. In this context, the body of knowledge usually is interpreted as having evolved from the work of a few experts through empirical research. Furthermore, it is assumed that these experts are capable of conveying this knowledge to others. As a consequence of this assumption, detailed and comprehensive instructional techniques to achieve specified goals are developed for use by the classroom teacher. These plans are typically presented to teachers in

the form of curriculum guides, learning modules or textbooks and are at times designed to be "teacher proof."

If the instructional process is perceived as not well understood, on the other hand, it would not be possible for a preplanned program to be in and of itself adequate. That is, regardless of the amount of work, thought and research that have been directed to understanding what instructional procedures may be most effective in particular situations, educators holding this assumption assume there are no preordained laws, rules or procedures that, when followed, will guarantee instructional success. Another way of stating this assumption is that the process is dynamic, unpredictable and can not be fully anticipated before events arise in the classroom. As a consequence of this assumption, the teacher is expected to act and react entirely upon one's own best judgment of what is appropriate. In order to do this effectively, the teacher must both understand the substance of instructional goals and be the expert in planning and applying instructional strategies.

These two assumptions: (1) the perceived variability of students and (2) the perceived nature of the instructional process can be used to provide a two-dimensional framework for classifying and comparing alternative instructional approaches. If each of these two assumptions become a continuous variable and are both considered to be necessary to any program description, a continuous two-dimensional Anglin Grid as shown in Figure 1 would result. Furthermore, upon this two-dimensional continuum could be placed four different theoretical types of educational organizations. As shown in Figure 1, the four types of educational organizations are labeled: Traditional, Academy, Systems and Open. The following is a brief discussion of

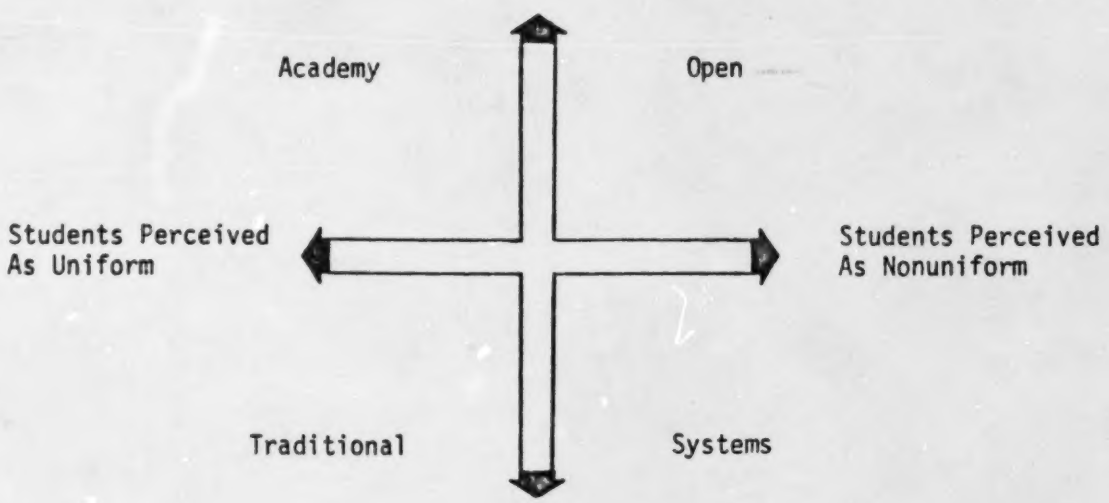

Figure 1. Four Types of Educational Organizations Within the Anglin Grid

how the Anglin Grid has been applied to compare four theoretical types of school organization.

Comparing Four Types of School Organization

The Traditional School on this continuum represents a routine organizational setting in which the instructional process is perceived as well understood and students are perceived to be much alike (uniform). Conversely, the Open School denotes a nonroutine type of school organization characterized by the perception that the instructional processes are not well understood and in which children are perceived as unique individuals (nonuniform). The Academy and Systems Schools are organizations which also differ in terms of perceived nature of the instructional process and the variability of students. The Academy School denotes an organization where instructional processes are perceived as not well understood and students are perceived as uniform. The Systems School is an organization where instructional processes are perceived as being well understood and students perceived as nonuniform.

The role of the teacher as a decision maker in each of these school organizational types is dependent on the assumptions upon which each is founded. The Traditional and Academy types of school are very closely related through the long-term decisions that are in each directed toward a large group of students. This similarity is expected since both are founded upon the basic assumption that students are uniform. Variation which might exist among students, therefore, is considered relatively insignificant. Distinct differences exist between the two school types, however, in the decision making responsibilities of teachers. Teachers in Traditional School organizations are not expected to make major instructional decisions. Because the nature of instruction is considered

to be well understood, it is assumed that these decisions can be written into texts and teachers' guides by specialists. Conversely, the Academy School is founded on the assumption that the nature of instruction is considered not well understood; hence, it is difficult to preplan a broad, comprehensive program. Consequently, the teacher must be an educational craftsman and is granted vast autonomy for instructional decision making.

Prominent decisions in the Systems and Open type schools are generally short-term decisions directed toward individual students. This would be expected since both assume students are nonuniform and individual differences must be addressed in the planning for an effective program. Teachers in the Open School work under the assumption that the nature of instruction is not well understood. These teachers are expected to be problem solvers capable of planning, developing and implementing appropriate instructional programs tailored to fit the needs of individual students. Hence, teachers in Open Schools are involved at every level of curriculum instruction planning. In the Systems School, however, it is assumed that the nature of instruction is well understood and specialists are charged with the development of a basic instructional program designed to accommodate various kinds of learning styles. The teacher's primary role in Systems Schools is to implement the preplanned program.

Comparing Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education programs can also be described using the Anglin Grid. For this description the basic assumptions become: (1) the extent to which teacher candidates are perceived to vary, and (2) the

extent to which the process of teacher education is perceived to be understood. By classifying program alternatives in terms of these variables, it is possible to identify four distinct approaches to teacher education: Traditional Teacher Education, Interdisciplinary Teacher Education, Open Alternative Teacher Education, and Competency-Based Teacher Education (Figure 2).

Comparing Four Teacher Education Programs

Traditional Teacher Education is identified in Figure 2 as depicting a highly routine teacher education program in which the nature of the teacher training process is perceived as well understood and teachers are perceived as uniform. Typically, prospective teachers are placed in lecture oriented classes and progress through a set curriculum in a standardized manner with the efficiency of instruction a predominate consideration. Extensive efforts are undertaken to ensure that uniform content coverage is provided for all prospective teachers even though they may have different instructors. Teacher certification is a natural outgrowth of finishing minimum course requirements. Upon obtaining certification, a teacher may be considered to be prepared to teach in Traditional School organizations identified in Figure 1. This description represents most teacher education programs functioning today. It is important to note that many efforts of faculties have focused upon changing Traditional Teacher Education programs. The following describes alternative directions that can be undertaken by faculties changing from traditional programs.

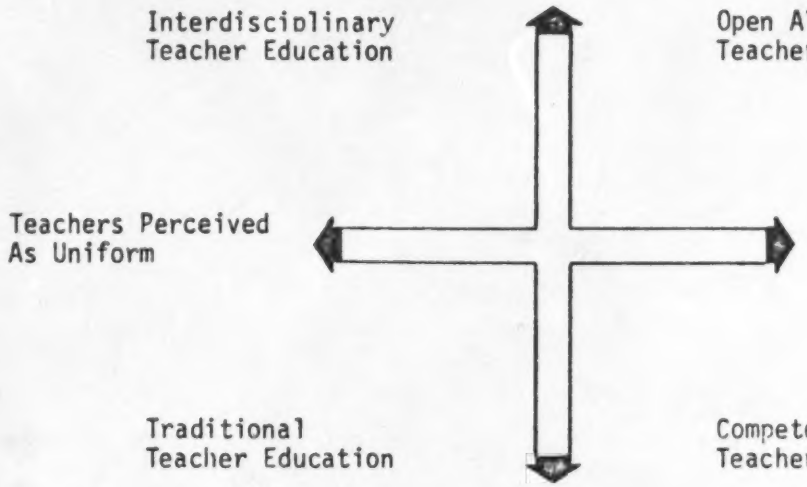

Figure 2. Four Types of Teacher Education Programs Within the Anglin Grid

Competency-Based Teacher Education

Competency-Based Teacher Education (CBTE) is founded upon the assumption that the nature of the teacher education process is perceived as well understood but teachers are perceived as unique individuals (nonuniform). The CBTE curriculum is designed as an integrated and cohesive total system consisting of alternative modules that can be fitted together to form a variety of instructional programs to meet the needs of individual teachers. Since the process of teacher education is perceived as well understood, most modules are predetermined and preplanned by curriculum specialists. Each prospective teacher, however, cooperatively with an instructor, selects optimal instructional modules. Teacher certification in CBTE programs symbolizes the attainment of prespecified competencies. It could be hypothesized that this type of teacher education strategy prepares teachers to use systematic diagnostic and prescriptive instructional procedures which are a necessary part of the Systems School organizations (Figure 1).

Interdisciplinary Teacher Education

The nature of the teacher education process is perceived as not well understood and teachers are perceived as basically uniform in the Interdisciplinary Teacher Education approach. Consequently, teacher education is considered more of an art than a science with no single discipline considered as an adequate guide for all instructional actions. Therefore, the interdisciplinary approach provides prospective teachers with a wide range of academic experiences from a variety of disciplines. The curriculum combines university-wide recommendations with recognized expertise of individual instructors. To ensure successful implementation of the Interdisciplinary Teacher Education approach, a careful coordination

of a variety of subject matter specialists is required. Since teachers are perceived as uniform, general teacher certification standards are the same for all. However, instructors still assume much autonomous control in translating the standards into instructional activities for the prospective teachers enrolled in their courses. For example, prospective teachers may take identically titled courses but receive content that varies from one instructor to another. The Academy School (Figure 1) may be the most congruent organizational setting for the teacher prepared by an interdisciplinary process.

Open Alternative Teacher Education

In Open Alternative Teacher Education programs, the nature of the teacher education process is perceived as not being well understood with few, if any, well-established instructional procedures that can be used with assurance of success. Teachers are perceived as highly variable (nonuniform), with each possessing unique talents, skills and interests. The resultant teacher education program, reflecting these assumptions, may be unique for each student and may also be continuously redesigned to fit the needs of its participants and the needs of an open array of alternative school designs. The curriculum may be built upon differing views of the educational process with unique combinations of these views taken by different prospective teachers. For example, the nature of the teacher education process being poorly understood, a prospective teacher may be expected to use many different means to become acquainted with alternative school designs such as open schools, free schools or street academies. Details concerning achievement and performance for prospective teachers would not be prespecified, but be dependent upon the unique program of each student. It may also be

determined cooperatively between the instructors and prospective teachers. Teacher certification requirements for such programs would necessarily be minimal when compared to other approaches and would tend to be oriented to individual teachers on the basis of the autonomous judgments of their instructors. Graduates of such programs may be primarily prepared to teach in settings characterized by the Open School organization described in Figure 1.

Implications of the Anglin Grid

There are three specific implications suggested by the Anglin Grid. First is that the identification of an innovation through its underlying assumptions can provide insight into the consequences of that particular innovation. Second is that a conceptual framework based upon theoretical organizational features can illuminate discussions of alternatives in teacher education. Third is that greater attention should be given to the interrelationship between certain underlying characteristics of a particular teacher education program and the type(s) of school organizations where program graduates are expected to be teaching.

Reflecting upon the basic assumptions underlying an innovation in teacher education can be very beneficial to identifying the possible consequences of that innovation. The types of decision making that need be undertaken by faculty members in planning and organizing a particular program, who should have what roles in communicating and implementing a program, and what would be suggested procedures for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of a program are all consequences directly related to underlying assumptions of a particular

innovation. Using one basic assumption from the Anglin Grid, the extent to which knowledge of the instructional process is perceived to be well understood can have important consequences on the decision making responsibilities of the instructors, the roles of the student teachers and the focus of the curriculum materials.

One major implication of this discussion is the extent to which particular innovations in teacher education can be understood through an organizational perspective. The two underlying assumptions raised by the Anglin Grid have been adapted from the organizational theories of Perrow. The possible variety in the four organizational types suggested by the Anglin Grid should provide suggestions for clear alternatives to the traditional approach that is so prevalent in current teacher education programs. Furthermore, the Anglin Grid suggests that the extent to which alternatives in teacher education can be expected to be implemented will be directly proportional to the extent to which current organizational features can be modified to reflect alternative assumptions about either the variability of students or the extent to which the process of becoming a teacher is well understood.

Typically, teacher educators have assumed that graduates of teacher education programs can be placed in all kinds of public school organizations. A primary implication of this paper is that as the profession comes to better understand the nature of schooling, the purposes of schools will become more specific and will require teachers with special expertise and experience. Hence, greater attention will need to be devoted to linking the goals and purposes of a teacher education program with the types of public school organizations in which the teacher

education graduates are expected to teach. (This position is consistent with that taken by Spodek The point here is not that CBTE necessarily educates student teachers who can operate only in Systems Schools. Instead, it is to ask the question, what do we know about the connection between the assumptions of a particular program in teacher education and the corresponding responsibilities that graduates will be expected to perform in the schools in which they teach? Can, for example, student teachers be expected to operate comfortably and effectively in an open classroom if they have been educated through a CBTE approach?

Summary

Although teacher education in this country has recently had a rich history of innovation, such efforts have lacked a conceptual framework. In this paper we have presented the Anglin Grid as an example of how a conceptual framework can be applied to place a potentially infinite variety of innovative programs into a more conceptually manageable system. The Anglin Grid has used two perspectives that in combination have been shown to differentiate alternative approaches to teacher education. These two perspectives are (a) the perceived variability of teachers, and (b) the extent to which the process of teacher education is perceived to be well understood.

The CBTE approach to teacher education (students uniform and state of knowledge known) is conceptually a very different approach to teacher education from either the interdisciplinary approach (students uniform and state of knowledge unknown) and the open alternative approach (students nonuniform and state of knowledge unknown). The Anglin Grid

provides a framework for discussing these differences and their programmatic consequences. Thus, it is suggested that the Anglin Grid can illuminate faculty discussions about both intentions and practices for the following reasons:

(1) It helps place different approaches to teacher education into a common perspective, offering a basis for discussing alternatives;

(2) It provides a much needed focus upon different sets of assumptions or rationales for developing an alternative approach to teacher education;

(3) It provides the profession a more inclusive framework for discussing the age-old question about the relationship of teacher education procedures to school practice (e.g., if trained in CBTE, can the teacher be expected to perform adequately in an alternative school design?);

(4) It anticipates new problems for in-service education and suggests alternative solutions to these problems (e.g., if a teacher has taught in one specific type of school, what training framework and implementation strategy may be most appropriate for retraining the teacher to perform in a different school setting?).

In conclusion, it has been suggested that the Anglin Grid is a framework upon which alternative teacher education strategies can be compared and differences discussed, a framework that offers some new interpretations of our options in implementing new strategies in teacher education, and a framework through which old questions can be rephrased and new questions asked. The point here is that either this or some other framework is sorely needed for innovative work to continue in teacher education.

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